DP

UNITED
NATIONS

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CP/EQG/4
24 March 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Fortieth session
1-18 June 1993, New York
Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Country, intercountry and global projects

FOURTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Programme period	Resources	$
1993-1995	Net IPF	7,053,000

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I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A. Current socio-economic situation

1. On attaining its independence, in 1968, Equatorial Guinea enjoyed one of the highest per-capita incomes among the countries of Central Africa and a comparatively high, though inequitable, level of development in the areas of education, health and infrastructure. This state of affairs stemmed from a classic, foreign-oriented plantation economy that existed side by side with a subsistence economy, thus imparting a dualistic character to the society. During the first 11 years of independent government, a dramatic socio-economic involution took place, with near-total disintegration of the infrastructure, severe political repression and a massive exodus of qualified human resources, both national and foreign. Little remained of the country's earlier boons, while its ills multiplied. Consequently, conditions at the start of the current regime in 1979 were far less favourable than those that had existed a decade earlier.

2. The 1980s witnessed an arduous struggle to piece back together the basic elements required for the operation of the State and the achievement of socio-economic development. First, a new impetus was given to institutions, enterprises and public services, and then the restoration of food and export-crop production was begun. In 1982 a new constitution was approved and important steps were taken to orient and coordinate external aid, which had begun to flow into the country in significant amounts. Equatorial Guinea's return to the international economy was guaranteed in 1983-1984, when it joined the Central African Customs and Economic Union and the Bank of Central African States. The Government adopted a structural adjustment programme in 1998, as well as an enhanced programme for the period 1993-1995. In passing a political parties act in 1991 and additional legislation on civil rights and institutional life in 1992, the country took a step in the direction of a democratic opening-up, which is essential for a full-blown development process.

3. According to the 1992 Human Development Report, Equatorial Guinea ranks 143rd among the 160 countries studied. The population was about 365,000 in 1991; life expectancy is 47 years and infant mortality is as high as 124 per thousand. According to recent Government data, the illiteracy rate of the adult population is 70 per cent, but it should be borne in mind that the ratio of distribution between men and women is 1.7 to 1. Though the nutritional situation is not the most dramatic in the world, mortality and morbidity due to malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases are extremely high. The elevated incidence of malaria, in particular, has a direct negative impact on the capacity for work and study. Despite significant advances achieved in the past few years, the educational system remains inadequate from the quantitative and, above all, the qualitative standpoint.

4. The period 1989-1991 witnessed a general slump of the economy due to various causes. The investment process was weak and inadequate, and the hoped-for increase in productivity in traditional sectors, especially cacao,

was not achieved. The terms of trade have developed unfavourably, and foreign indebtedness amounts to more than 600 dollars per capita. The global demand for goods and services has been on the decline, and this has further depressed the subsistence economy, to which a large portion of the population continues to view itself as belonging.

5. Despite the difficulties mentioned, toward the end of 1992 there were some signs that permitted cautious optimism. With the completion of the second structural adjustment programme, the total budget deficit had dropped from 2.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1991 to 1.2 per cent in 1992, and it was anticipated that the balance of payments would show a surplus of $2.8 million the same year, as compared with a deficit of 12 million the previous year. These improvements and the IMF projections for the coming five-year period were the result, in large measure, of the petroleum operations begun in the island region in January 1992. By the end of July of that year, 350,000 barrels had been exported and the recoverable reserves in that field were estimated at a total of 28 million barrels of condensate. The well-programmed, careful use of this resource might bolster the economy for the rest of the decade and even beyond if the new prospecting under way in the continental region meets with success.

B. National development strategies and objectives

6. No comprehensive national development plan has yet been elaborated. In the absence of such a plan, work proceeds on the basis of a set of sectoral or partial strategies prepared by various bodies, especially within the framework of the preparatory work for the successive Round Table conferences of donors sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

7. Equatorial Guinea faces a twofold challenge in the coming years. Not only must it accelerate and ensure its progress along the path of democratization and institutionalization: it also needs to solve its most acute economic problems. If it failed to do this, it would not be able to achieve that broad human development which, for a genuinely autonomous society, is both an input and a product. With this in view, the Government has established the following main objectives and strategies, within a time frame extending to the year 2000: (a) improvement of the quality of life of the population through increased opportunities for remunerative employment; provision of greater access to basic consumer goods; improvement and expansion of public services, especially in the areas of health and education; and encouragement of grass-roots participation in the management of the society; (b) strengthening of the system of production and diversification of production for export and domestic consumption; (c) consolidation of national institutions, with enhanced public planning and management capacities; (d) conciliation between the development of productive activities and the use of natural resources, with proper management and conservation of the environment; (e) reduction of regional imbalances and improved spatial integration.

II. EXTERNAL COOPERATION

A. Role of external cooperation

8. External cooperation represents a significant portion of the GDP of Equatorial Guinea. In 1990 it amounted to $60 million, which was equivalent to 37 per cent of the GDP or $169 per capita. From another point of view, the extent of this assistance can be seen in the presence in the country of 363 cooperation agents at the end of 1991, or in other words more than one for every thousand inhabitants, or one to every 15 civil servants, irrespective of their level of training. One-third of this cooperation is multilateral, almost all of which stems from the United Nations system and the European Community (EC), the ratio between them being 4 to 3. Bilateral cooperation, which represents the remaining two-thirds, is derived primarily from Spain, followed by France. Other donors are China, Canada, Germany, Nigeria and the United States. Ninety-four percent of all external cooperation is of the non-reimbursable type.

9. Cooperation is characterized by a high and increasing share devoted to technical assistance (30 per cent in 1987 and 63 per cent in 1990). The achievements realized in the training of national personnel both at home and abroad ought normally to have resulted in a trend in the opposite direction, but the State's financial and other limits made it necessary for a portion of assistance to be used for financing substitute-type international experts and national counterpart personnel as national consultants. Concurrently, 21 per cent of the cooperation amount in 1990 was earmarked for budgetary assistance or for shoring up the balance of payments, with only 16 per cent remaining for investment projects. The sectoral distribution of cooperation is broad, but the balance is tipped in favour of the health and education sectors.

B. Aid coordination arrangements

10. In view of the magnitude and diversity of the external assistance flowing into Equatorial Guinea, the related coordination is a constant concern of donors and Government alike. Without a doubt, improvements are needed on both sides. The weaknesses of the governmental structure and public administration, needless to say, have a marked impact on the severity of the problem. The allocation of functions among the different bodies and the demarcation of responsibilities have been vague and unstable. The substantive programming of development activities has been hampered by faulty lines of communication between central planning authorities and sectoral ministries, due to frequent changes in both. The incorporation of external cooperation into the overall development effort has been rendered difficult by the lack of clarity in the relations between the general planning function on the one side and external cooperation on the other. This situation has given rise to a certain reaction on the part of the donor community, and the Government continues its efforts to find a suitable, lasting model for the coordination of technical assistance. In this endeavour, it receives continual support from UNDP and the other cooperators.

III. THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

A. Assessment of ongoing country programme

11. To a large extent, the task of the third programme originally approved for the period 1988-1991 and subsequently extended to 1992 was to respond to social and economic emergencies inherited from the previous regime. The programme was made up in large measure of continuations and new phases of old projects extended not so much out of a desire to achieve very high levels in terms of quality as to defend, stabilize and, in so far as possible, proceed further with certain forward-moving processes initiated during the second programme. One of the rare exceptions to this was the innovative incursion into the area of forest management. UNDP cooperation during the period 1988-1992 was thus concentrated on supporting development efforts in the following four areas: (a) strengthening the central public institutions and enhancing their efficacy; (b) achieving a higher level and broader and more equitable distribution of basic education and health services; (c) raising productivity in strategic sectors; (d) increasing the country's human-resource capital.

12. In each of the areas mentioned, the third programme produced important individual results, such as the creation of a public investment plan (PIP), a basic national-accounts system, the institution of a new primary education curriculum, the elaboration of a forest management plan for the continental region, and human resources training in various fields. On the whole, the programme contributed to the country's attaining higher levels of rationality and self-sustainment in the development process.

13. In the implementation of the programme, a number of obstacles were encountered which, while they cannot be totally eliminated in the short term, might be appreciably diminished. The main obstacle for the Government is the requirement to provide the necessary counterparts for the entire human component from within the national budget. To cope with this problem, the donors have chosen in favour of financing a growing portion of this element through the use of national counterpart personnel under the designation "national consultants" and a fairly disorderly and distorting ad hoc system of incentives for routine programme and project management. This solution has begun to have repercussions detrimental to the effectiveness of long-term cooperation. The problem will be taken up within the fourth programme.

B. Proposals for UNDP cooperation

1. Preparatory process

14. Programming for the fourth country programme began in April 1990, following the mid-term review of the third programme, at which time some outlines began to take shape for its thematic content as well as for working procedures. Toward the end of 1991 the decision was taken, for primarily logistical reasons, to approve an extension of the third country programme to December 1992, maintaining all the objectives and strategies of the original programme. This step gave more time for preparing the fourth programme and

permitted the completion of the background papers for the third Round Table conference of donors and a more timely review of the structural adjustment programme (October 1992).

15. During the last quarter of 1992, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, together with the sectoral ministries and all the cooperating agencies, coordinated a final review of priority needs and available resources in the area of technical assistance, bearing strongly in mind the remarks formulated in the UNDP advisory note. Consequently, an up-to-date information base was available for the final design of the programme, which took place in close collaboration between the Office of the Resident Representative and the said Ministry. During that phase it was decided that the fourth programme should cover a period of only three years, to December 1995, chiefly with a view to ensuring proper synchronization with the programmes of various cooperators and with the PIP, but also in consideration of the phase of political transition through which the country is passing. The portion of the IPF corresponding to the year 1996 was approved as part of the fifth cycle and will be programmed in due time.

2. Strategy for UNDP cooperation

16. UNDP cooperation within the framework of the fourth country programme will serve to coordinate a wide range of external cooperation activities having various sources. UNDP will continue to concentrate cooperation on a limited number of areas with a view to maximizing its impact. It will pursue the same goal through a selection of programmes in which its support can have multiplying and regenerative effects within the context of global cooperation and in which the major obstacles to development are to be found. For these reasons and in consideration of the Government's development strategy, three main areas have been defined for the period 1993-1995, namely: strengthening of existing social services and development of human resources; national capacity-building in the areas of planning, management and administration; and balanced, sustainable use of natural resources.

17. Human development is a key component that runs through the entire programme. In this connection, it should be pointed out on the one hand that the theme of women in development will receive special attention in all thematic areas, and on the other, that UNDP will take part in the introduction and planning of a NATCAP (National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes) exercise and a programme of national long-range prospective studies.

3. UNDP cooperation in selected areas of concentration

18. Strengthening of social services and human resources development. To break the vicious circle: poverty - disease/illiteracy - poverty, the reduction of morbidity and the raising of educational levels are viewed from the standpoint of development strategy as indispensable requisites for economic progress. At present, the precarious health of many segments of the population has dire consequences for productivity in both the formal and

informal sectors of the economy. Similarly, the extreme dearth of qualified human resources at every level has been the cause of many failures in the execution of development projects. For these reasons, cooperation will be concentrated on key points in the areas of health and education, from the planning level right down to work in the field.

19. In the health sector, support will continue to be provided to the National Programme for the Control of Malaria and the national campaign against AIDS. In both cases, cooperation will devoted to aspects relating to basic infrastructure, information and education of the population and training of staff. In view of the broad collaboration of numerous cooperators in the field of primary health care, UNDP will perform a sectoral evaluation in an effort to ensure that efforts are properly coordinated and that any gap in the national programme is identified as requiring specific assistance in future. In any event, UNDP, through the provision of United Nations Volunteers (UNV), will maintain its support to activities intended to benefit the rural female population in the fields of maternal and child health and spacing of pregnancies, in which the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Cooperación Española are also active.

20. In the educational sector, cooperation will be directed toward the introduction of the two goals of high overall quality and relevance to the country's real needs and possibilities. Unfortunately, in view of the economic situation of Equatorial Guinea, it is not possible, either at present or in the medium term, to achieve total quantitative coverage simultaneously or to produce the necessary numbers of graduates at the different levels with know-how truly applicable on the labour and professional markets. The country's urgent needs require that priority be given to the second aspect. UNDP will therefore collaborate in the consolidation of the curricular reform already under way at the primary level, the creation of new options for secondary education, especially vocational, and activities for creating a national academic curriculum that is resolute and coherent. For obvious reasons, special efforts will be directed toward increasing the opportunities for women to take advantage of the formal educational system. In the coordination of external cooperation in the educational sector, especial account will be taken of the lengthy and substantial services of Cooperación Española and the experience accumulated by UNICEF in the country.

21. In recognition of the fact that the country's troubled history has caused it to fall behind in the evolution of human rights and democracy, the fourth country programme provides for assistance in that area. This may include support for the future electoral process and the National Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations system.

22. National capacity-strengthening in the areas of planning, management and administration. The Government needs to bring into harmony the effort to achieve macro-economic equilibria and those aimed at improving the living conditions of the population. Therefore, the national planning, management and administration system needs to be able to identify development potential as well as limitations, both structural and short-term; to formulate consistent strategies based on objective analyses of relevant, reliable data;

to manage well-chosen and properly formulated development programmes; and to administer efficiently the scant human and financial resources available. Work along these lines began in the early 1980s within the framework of the Round Table conferences of donors. Now it is both timely and necessary to transform those ad hoc activities into an ongoing exercise, conceived not as a step take in reaction to donor information requirements, but as one of the country's own active instruments - an incipient national development plan. Here, external cooperation must be determined as a function of national development policies, not the inverse.

23. UNDP cooperation in the areas indicated will continue not by means of separate projects as in the past, but through broad support to the related Government programme. Inasmuch as this involves both a considerable number of national bodies and several external cooperation agencies, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the Government requires the support of UNDP in the overall conduct of the programme with a view to obtaining the maximum benefit and avoiding the dispersion or duplication of efforts. The choice of UNDP for this task is based primarily on its special quality of neutrality and its long history of effective action in the country. Alongside its coordination activities, UNDP will collaborate in specific areas, such as global economic planning and its articulation with sectoral planning, monitoring of the external debt, and the fine-tuning of the PIP. In all its work it will pay especial attention both to the interrelationship between long-term global strategy and short- and medium-term structural adjustment programmes and to the links between those tools and the PIP. The process of detailed design of the global programme began in the last quarter of 1992.

24. A genuine public administration reform is essential. This must be done in such a way as to cut public expenditure, modernize the administration at every level and create a favourable atmosphere for the efficient performance of government agencies and the individuals that make them up. UNDP, through its Management Development Programme (MDP) and in coordination with several projects of the World Bank and of the French Government, will attend to some of the most urgent needs, such as the simplification of procedures in selected agencies or the review of wage and benefit policies.

25. The possibility of cooperation in the promotion of the national private sector is contemplated, though the extreme weakness or near-nonexistence of that sector renders it difficult to identify starting points. A first step would be to review the results of a small project on the subject, carried out in 1987 but without any clear conclusion, and also the observations made during an investigative mission and a seminar that took place recently. This exercise might be followed by a somewhat more ambitious study to provide an in-depth assessment of current conditions in the sector and attempt to define a realistic plan of action.

26. The impact of the programme for national capacity-strengthening in the areas of planning, management and administration will be measured from several angles. For the short and medium term, for example, this will involve observing the degree of attainment of objectives and of financial implementation of external-cooperation programmes and projects; of preservation or improvement of macro-economic balances; and of the stability

of staffs in public administration and the increase in their efficiency. The related UNDP support programme will incorporate a well-structured subprogramme for continual evaluation.

27. Balanced, sustainable use of natural resources. One of the natural resources of economic and environmental importance to Equatorial Guinea is, first and foremost, the tropical forest, which might be exploited in such a way as to improve the country's trade balance in the short term; furthermore, it has the advantage of being inexhaustible, provided that it is administered properly. Consequently, UNDP will play an important role in the implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, in cooperation with the European Community (EC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank. Among other contributions, a coordinator will be provided for the forest development programme, which covers both regions of the country, and operative ties will be established with the UNDP regional programme for Africa.

28. This line of action will be supplemented by the participation of UNDP and other donors in a global analysis effort to assess the country's environmental situation, the goal of which is to establish an environmental plan coupled with a plan for the optimal exploitation of natural resources, including hunting and fishing resources, within sustainable limits and in harmony with the fundamental economic activities of the population. The programme will be based on initiatives and proposals of the Government, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and will take into consideration the interest expressed by EC and the Government of Spain. UNDP is willing to support all efforts of the Government to ensure the coordination of the programme.

C. Cooperation outside selected areas of concentration

29. UNDP-financed support by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) will be provided to the programmes of the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in the areas of agricultural diversification and food production and to the World Food Programme (WFP) in its home and school gardening activities. Assistance is to be provided to ad hoc training activities, especially those directed toward women. The existence of various uncontrollable external factors warrants the assignment of 25 per cent of the resources available under the IPF to an unprogrammed reserve. While it is assumed that the majority of this reserve will be used to reinforce already-identified programmes, there is always the possibility that it may be needed to cover unforeseen expenses.

D. Implementation and management arrangements

30. Advantage will be taken of every existing means for obtaining technical know-how at the lowest possible cost. This presupposes maximum utilization of qualified volunteers (UNV); skills available in other developing countries (Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)), especially in the same region; short missions of expatriates of Equatorial Guinea participating

in the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN); and in general all human resources available in the country. The programme approach will be applied, and at the same time all necessary steps will be taken to permit the introduction on a wider scale of the modality of Government implementation of programmes and projects, including specific training in work methods and related techniques. Finally, in order to move closer to a solution of the serious problem of the use of national personnel in programmes based on external cooperation, a detailed study will be conducted of the remunerations and incentives currently offered by the various cooperating agencies and the greatest possible effort will be made to formulate a unified policy and establish a common modus operandi for all donors.

31. All necessary efforts will be made to clarify and confirm ministerial responsibilities for the coordination of assistance and national planning with a view to the negotiation and implementation of the programme. Within this context, it can be said that the focal point for policy decisions in respect of the programme would be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Use of the French Language, and in respect of management and implementation, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The latter, through its Department of Programme Planning and Coordination, would participate actively in day-to-day programme monitoring, review and execution, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would play the predominant role in the annual review of the programme, with the active participation of United Nations agencies and other concerned institutions. At the end of the first year of programme implementation, a review would take place for the purpose of evaluating the degree of success with respect to the new policy objectives and the programme approach, with emphasis on themes relating to human development, such as governability and democratization.

Annex I

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. ESTIMATED RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING

(Thousands of dollars)

Carry-over from fourth cycle IPF	(33)	
Fifth cycle IPF	11 233	
Borrowings for the extension of the third programme	(1 900)	
Portion of IPF to be used in 1996	(2 247)	
Subtotal IPF available 1993-1995		7 053
Cost-sharing	-	-
TOTAL		7 053

II. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) BY AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Area of concentration	(Thousands of dollars) IPF	Percentage
Social services and human resources	2 257	32
Planning, management and administration	2 045	29
Natural resources/environment	988	14
Subtotal	5 290	75
Unprogrammed reserve	1 763	25
TOTAL	7 053	100

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III. COMPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER SOURCES USED IN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

(Thousands of dollars)

A. UNDP-administered funds		
SPR	100	
UNCDF	3 000	
UNIFEM	150	
MDP	500	
Subtotal		3 750
B. Other United Nations resources		
JCGP participating agencies		
UNFPA	2 000	
UNICEF	4 500	
WFP	11 000	
IFAD	1 500	
Other United Nations agencies (non-UNDP financed)	800	
Global Environment Facility	100	
Subtotal		19 900
C. Non-United Nations resources		-
TOTAL		30 703

Annex II

PROGRAMME MATRIX

Area of concentration	Area of focus					
	Poverty eradication and grass-roots participation	Environment and natural resource management	Management development	TCDC	Transfer and adaptation of technology	WID
I. SOCIAL SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES						
Health	*		*			*
Education	*	*	*			*
Human rights/ democratic process	*			*		*
II. PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION						
Government planning/management	*	*	*	*	*	*
Administrative reform			*			*
Private sector			*			
III. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT						
Forestry sector		*	*	*	*	
Conservation	*	*		*	*	*